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AN ACCURATE AND CONCISE

SKETCH OF

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PORTSMOUTH, OHIO,

— FROM THE —

BOARD OF TRADE

OF SAID CITY.

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Prepared by Col. J. E. Wharton,

AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD

FEBRUARY 26, 1876.

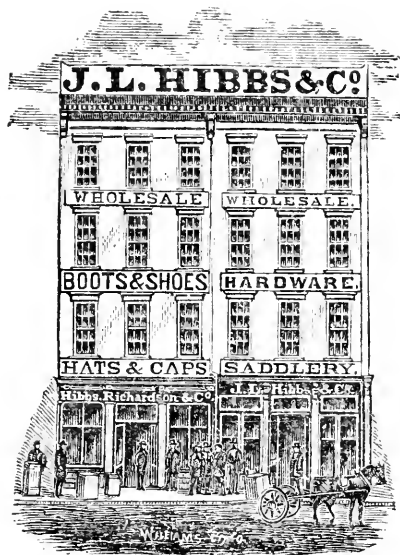
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PORTSMOUTH:

ITS POPULATION, BUSINESS, AND MINERAL, AGRICULTURAL,
COMMERCIAL AND MANUFACTURING RESOURCES.

Portsmouth is situated on the Ohio river, 116 miles above Cincinnati, at the mouth of the Scioto river, which flows from the centre of this great State through valleys unequalled in fertility, and of such extent as to add largely to our National exports. It is also the southern terminus of the Ohio Canal, thus affording a direct water communication between the South and West, and North and East; also of the Hocking Valley Railroad, long since constructed, and the Scioto Valley Road, now being completed from Columbus to this city. It will also necessarily form an important point in the extension of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, now completed from Norfolk, Virginia, to Huntington, West Virginia, on the Ohio river, forty-five miles above this city, in its connection with the Northwest, and its point of divergence to strike the Southern Pacific Railroad. It is also probable that, either by public or private means, the James River and Kanawha Canal will be completed at no distant day, and Portsmouth will then be the central point of three great water lines to the sea, and, as we shall proceed to show, naturally and artificially, the best entrepot of the trade, of a large and rich district of country, as it now is.

While, as we have said, Portsmouth is one hundred and sixteen miles nearer than Cincinnati to the Atlantic seaports, the navigation of the river from New Orleans to the former is as good as to the latter, in all stages of water, while there is no important point above to which it is not obstructed by low water, or ice. None, in fact, approaching it in business or population, nearer than Wheeling, two hundred and seventy miles above,

while serious bars exist within thirty miles ; thus making Portsmouth the most eligible port for the import and transshipment of the vast sugars, coffees, fruits, tobaccos, and spices of the islands and South America ; the cotton, sugars and fruits of the South, and for sending off in large vessels the minerals and products of the North.

The following steamboats arrive at this port and depart on their regular days, making this the terminus of their routes, viz : *Potomac*, Cincinnati to Portsmouth, tri-weekly ; *Carrie*, Portsmouth, to Concord, daily ; *Handy*, Portsmouth to Rome, daily ; *Fannie Dugan*, daily, between Portsmouth and Guyandotte ; *Scioto*, daily, between Portsmouth and Huntington ; *Granite State*, between Portsmouth and Pittsburg, weekly. Thus, we have four boats daily, one tri-weekly, and one weekly, that end their trips at this city ; those above being lighter, and often obstructed by low water. Towboats and barges also arrive frequently from the Mississippi, with ores for exchange. The following boats land and do a large business here, viz : *Fleetwood* and *Bostona*, Cincinnati to Huntington, daily ; *Ohio No. 4*, *Telegraph* and *St. James*, Cincinnati to Pomeroy, making a daily line ; *Hudson* and *Andes*, Cincinnati, to Wheeling, tri-weekly line ; *Julia No. 2*, Cincinnati to Charleston, W. Va., weekly ; *Emma Graham*, Cincinnati to Pittsburg, weekly. These comprise the boats that now navigate the river, except occasional towboats.

Such is the *present* importance of the city, so far as the business of the river is concerned ; but it is the general opinion that the effect of the improvement at the mouth of the Mississippi will be to insure the building of a class of low-pressure boats that will navigate the Gulf and the large rivers, exchanging our iron, coal and produce for that of the islands and Gulf coasts, without breaking bulk between the points. From her position relative to navigation and avenues of interior trade, as well as from her mineral wealth and manufactures, Portsmouth would necessarily be the terminus of such Ohio river lines, distributing by other means of transport the imports, and able to give return freights of iron, machinery and agricultural implements. A glance at the map will show that this trade must extend through

Ohio, Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, and Western Pennsylvania, all of which are now much dependent upon Portsmouth for their trade, and the intimacy of that connection is daily increasing.

In this connection, we should do injustice to our cause did we not name the projected Portsmouth and Pound Gap Railroad, which has attracted much attention, both here and along the line, one hundred and sixty-eight miles, through Kentucky to Pound Gap, in the Cumberland mountains, about thirty miles east of the well-known Cumberland Gap. This road extends through coal and iron deposits the whole distance—is surveyed, and all preliminary work done. Deposits of iron at one point on the road are pronounced by competent geologists only inferior to those of Lake Superior or Missouri. Of this rich region, Portsmouth must become the commercial and manufacturing centre, alike from her location and past progress.

PORTSMOUTH AND ITS ENVIRONS.

Portsmouth is situated upon a bluff, which extends several miles eastward from the Scioto River, above the highest water, and is one of the most beautiful and healthy locations, with a temperate and pleasant climate. Hon. T. H. Benton once justly said that the buffalo and the Indian were the best engineers and land agents, selecting nature's routes and the best lands. Not only these, but the traces of a pre-historic race, and the behemoth and mammoth abound more extensively in and around our city than anywhere else in the State. It was also early settled by an industrious and economical people, depending on their own resources, and without asking or receiving any aid from the National or State Governments, or from foreign capital; has grown to a population, according to the local census of 1875, of 13,731, with manufactures within the city amounting to \$4,202,140 annually, her wholesale trade to \$7,069,185, of which the value of foreign products exceeds two millions, now necessarily bought at second hand for want of a Port of Entry; while the entire business of the city exceeds fourteen millions of dollars annually. Our well-supported churches number twenty-seven, of almost all denominations. The public schools of the city are thirty-seven,

with thirty-nine competent teachers, occupying six large buildings, including one being erected for a colored school, at a cost of \$12,500, the whole schools being supported at an annual cost to the city for teachers and incidentals of \$27,000. We have also a large and prosperous ladies' seminary, and several private schools, with a Children's Home, costing \$30,000. In 1871, the last year of which we have full data, the public and private improvements amounted to \$637,630. The city water works, with eleven miles of pipe, cost \$150,000; gas works, with thirteen miles, cost \$160,000, and several miles of street railroad are now being completed.

INTERNAL REVENUE.—The internal revenue collected from this, the Eleventh District, as we learn from Col. B. F. Coates, Collector, was, during the last fiscal year, \$805,018.30, and while the District consisted of Scioto, Lawrence, Vinton, Jackson, Adams and Gallia Counties, including the cities of Ironton and Gallipolis, the city of Portsmouth alone paid \$750,000 of that, or nearly fourteen-fifteenths of the whole. The District now includes what was the Twelfth, being the Counties of Pike, Ross, Hocking, Pickaway, Fairfield and Perry, which last year paid \$424,928.10. The estimates for the current year for the whole District, are \$1,250,000, of which Portsmouth alone will pay nearly three-fifths, as she has paid that proportion of the \$13,556,555.86 collected since 1862, of which NONE has been expended here.

The annual receipts of the Post Office in this city for the sale of stamps, newspaper postage and box rents, is over \$10,000.

SCIOTO COUNTY

Is twenty by thirty miles square, and is as rich as any District of the size in the West, in agricultural and mineral wealth. The Scioto Valley is broad, annually overflowed, and thus kept surpassingly fertile. The western portion of the county, as well as some of the eastern, is still well timbered, while the eastern portion, though hilly, is kept fertile by the fact that its soil is a calcareous loam, continually renewed by the underlying limestone. The timber of portions of the county is well preserved, and the adjoining counties in Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia, are abundantly supplied with the best of oak, poplar, ash, walnut,

maple, beech, cherry, hickory, locust, cedar and yellow pine, the latter now much in demand for masts of vessels.

STONE.—In the whole western part of the County are valuable deposits of the best building stone, of beautiful drab and brown, receiving a perfect finish, and more valuable as building stone than most of the celebrated Waverly, or the Connecticut brown stone, being more durable. It was used in the suspension bridge piers at Cincinnati, and supplies the whole demand of that city for building and flagging. It is also sent to Chicago, Cleveland and New York for building purposes.

In the north part of the county is a large deposit of Burr stone, pronounced by Mr. Mather, late State Geologist, to be superior to any except the French Burr. East of the river are deposits of fire clay of the best quality and inexhaustible in quantity, the manufactures from which supply this city, Cincinnati, and nearly all the cities on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. They also supply Chicago, and many thousands are annually sent West as far as Utah, and sold in all the principal cities in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. There are nine manufactories in our immediate vicinity, principally owned in this city, which supply fifty thousand of these brick per day, or about fifteen millions annually. So great is the supply of fire clay of the best quality, that the manufacture can be trebled, and yet the supply last thousands of years.

A portion of the rock in the region is so perfect an argillaceous sand-stone, or nearly silicate of alumina, that it is largely used at home and abroad for fire-beds and cupolas to furnaces; supplies Tennessee for that purpose, and cargoes have been sent to Oregon. The deposits of coarse sandstone are very large and valuable—are, and will be, used for furnaces, as well as other buildings. The deposits of blue, white, and ferriferous limestone are also large in the eastern part of the county and not the least valuable of her vast deposits.

IRON AND COAL.—Upon these deposits, in their abundance and their superior quality, we might rest our claims to your action, had we no other, as the facility they give for the manufacture of iron over anywhere else in the country, insure us heavy exports by means of our routes to the seaboard, bringing back imports

to a like extent. Within an average of less than thirty miles of Portsmouth, and mainly dependent upon it for trade, are fifty-seven furnaces, each manufacturing 2,500 tons annually—an aggregate of 142,500 tons of the best pig iron, known as the *Hanging Rock*, of which the iron and steel was made, which, in the late war, covered our Mississippi gun-boats, and protected them from Forts Henry and Donelson's Confederate balls. It is remarkable for its body, strength and tenacity, and largely supplies Wheeling, Steubenville, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit and Buffalo. The demand is only limited by the present capacity of the furnaces, which will be much increased as soon as the manufacturing sites are opened to the world by railroads. Prof. Briggs, State Geologist, some years ago, stated that the counties of Scioto, Lawrence, and Jackson were able to supply 400,000 tons of this superior iron annually for 2,700 years, and as much more has been since developed. Four other Ohio counties adjoining these are richly supplied, and a greater scope in eastern Kentucky and West Virginia, until it is forced upon us that this immediate region, to all of which Portsmouth is the commercial and manufacturing centre, is unsurpassed in its capacity for iron manufacture by any section of the country. Such developments are now being made in the eastern part of this county—finding all varieties of ore, coal, and limestone in the same hill—as prove that the best quality of iron can be manufactured at the lowest price possible in any locality. In this connection we call your attention to the following facts embraced in the statistical report of the Secretary of the National Iron Masters' Convention, held in Philadelphia in 1875. "Imports of iron and steel and the manufactures thereof in 1874, \$24,600,720; being a reduction from \$61,724,237 in 1872. The direct exports of the same for the year 1874 were \$20,460,752, an increase from 1873 of nearly four millions," and showing a regular increase of about two millions annually for several years. He also remarks that the greatest increase in the manufacture of iron with bituminous coal is in South-eastern Ohio. The recent discoveries of black band ore, among the other varieties, further adds to our conviction that large exports, as well as imports, must find here their most valuable interior

port, and that, if the Government desires economy, as well as convenience in her own iron manufactures, all things point to this as the best and cheapest place for the establishment of a NATIONAL ARMORY, or removal of the same from points where the manufacture is necessarily more expensive.

CHARCOAL has hitherto been used here for the manufacture of iron very extensively, and the supply is still large, and will always be sufficient for this manufacture, when desired, as the nature of the soil and climate is such as to renew the forest growth with remarkable rapidity.

BITUMINOUS COAL.—The quantity of coal of the sulphurless variety, and well calculated for the manufacture of iron in the raw state, and other coals, is greatly beyond any *possible* demand. Prof. Briggs, in his Geological report, says: “This belt of coal is equivalent to fifty miles in length, five miles in width, and nine feet thick, and will yield nine millions of tons per square mile. Prof. Mather endorses this, and says: “This coal is very pure, yielding but little ash or residuum, and has scarce a trace of sulphur.” A recent development of this coal and iron in this county has been examined by a scientific and practical Committee of this Board, who report that in all the numerous hills, in some five miles square, which they examined, they found nineteen feet of pure coal, which by a railroad of less than twenty miles, can be delivered in this city at \$1.40 per ton, or 5 cents the bushel, and to manufactures for a less price.

LABOR.—The cost of good and free labor depends upon health, comfort of climate, cost of food and clothing, churches and schools. As we have shown, these are all that labor can desire, therefore labor here is fully as cheap as at any other place in the country, and yields more comfort for the same money.

The facts we have presented render this city one of the most safe and desirable points in the country for the location of capital or manufactures of any description, and they will be welcomed here by an eminently refined, social and friendly people.

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